Reema Bhandari

I/S Chemistry

Instructor: Cheryl Madeira

December 8, 2011

***Memories of a Beautiful Home***

Growing up near the Bay of Bengal had always been my favourite memory of home. My friends and I would go down and swim in the fresh water, would fish and play in the sand for hours. All that had changed the year I turned fifteen, when the big contractors like Kingfisher came and decided that the coast near our village would have been the perfect site to dismantle their ships that were at least a few decades old. That was the last time I remember being happy about living near the open sea. Every summer after that the only thing I ever did was help my father and countless other villagers dismantle these large ships that were no longer of any use. The once clear fresh water had now turned into a murky brown from all of the oil pollution that floated on top of the surface water, the fish slowly began to die out, and more and more of the soil was eroding as the years went by. Papa always made it seem like our job was so important, he’d always tell me that without us all of the parts would go to waste and the companies would lose lots of profit because the scrap metal could be used as valuable raw materials. I trusted my father, he was the smartest man I knew, but sometimes I wondered if all of that would be worth costing us our beautiful home.

A couple of years later, my question had been answer. The beauty of my home had been destroyed along with the life of the one person I respected and loved the most. Papa had worked day and night for the ship dismantling industry, and after ten years of it, it finally paid him back in the worst way possible. My father was diagnosed with cancer, his illness was credited to over exposure of toxic and harmful substances, the main being asbestos. It’s been five years since my father passed away, and the process of dismantling ships is still occurring. We moved to Mumbai, a year after his death, my hopes are to go back and try to get some type of health regulations passed for the workers, until then I wait and watch silently as the fondest memory I associated with home has now become a burden, something I no longer want to think about or remember.